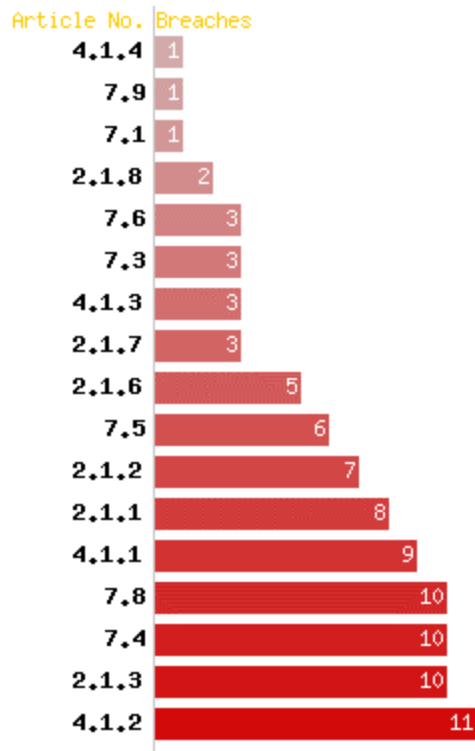


Zimbabwe Election Watch : Issue 16

Sokwanele
January 28th, 2008

Breaches in Issue 16



The announcement by President Mugabe that the elections will be held on March 29 has received widespread condemnation. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) says the date is a blow to current mediation efforts by South African President Thabo Mbeki to end the country's economic and political turmoil.

Eddie Cross, an economic adviser to MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai, writes in his weekly letter that the February 8 nomination date - which should in fact be during March - was selected very carefully by the regime and is a cunning part of the overall strategy worked out 10 months ago. The early nomination date makes it almost impossible for the opposition to get candidates registered for the poll.

Cross continues: "What Zanu PF did when confronted in March 2007 with the (then) demand by South Africa that they hold the elections on schedule in March 2008, and that they hold them under "free and fair" conditions, was that they convened the 'Joint Operations

Command'. JOC evolved a plan they have since been implementing and, like all of their plans, it had one central objective: how to hold onto power at all costs.

1. First they resolved to smash the organisational structures of the MDC... (During March 2007, the MDC leadership was beaten and brutalised en route to the Save Zimbabwe prayer meeting and subsequently thousands of MDC activists have been driven out of the country. MDC structures in many parts of the country have been wiped out and the party headquarters have been smashed twice with the loss of all records and millions of dollars of damage).

2. Then Zanu PF agreed to go along with the demands of President Mbeki and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), but in the conviction that they could manipulate this process and avoid dismantling the system they had built up over the past decade which had enabled them to determine, in advance, whatever result they thought they needed from the election itself.

3. Then finally, they (resolved) to take measures to reduce the urban vote and bring the urban population to heel in the same way they had built up control systems in the rural areas..."

Writing for the Cape Times (SA), journalist Peter Fabricius says: "For Zimbabwe to hold an election that meets Mbeki's test of universal acceptability, a new constitution is necessary. It would contain a proper bill of rights and an independent media commission; would take the vital voter registration process out of the hands of officials answerable only to Mugabe and generally diminish the extraordinary executive powers he has given himself, which would allow him to control and possibly manipulate the elections. Postponing the election is also critical so that the necessary reforms can take place. The MDC has been asking for the elections to take place in June. It will take much longer than that even to restore politics to something like normality. But those extra three months would at least make a difference..."

The two factions of the MDC, which have agreed to reunite and back a single election candidate, have called for the elections to be postponed until the introduction of a new constitution. They also want a new and independent electoral commission and voters' roll, and the redrawing of the disputed electoral boundaries, which blatantly favour the ruling party.

The Zimbabwe Standard comments: "By the calculations of most neutral observers, preparations for the harmonised elections are so behind schedule it is unrealistic - and undemocratic - for them to go ahead in March... Only Zanu PF could benefit from a March election. The party can move swiftly into action once the electoral procedures are switched into motion..."

The Times (UK) notes that "one of Mugabe's tricks has been to manipulate the voters' roll to pour thousands of ruling party workers into opposition strongholds. His regime also retains control of television and radio, and an "independent" electoral commission is packed with Zanu PF supporters."

Political analyst John Makumbe says "it has become very clear that the ruining Zanu PF party does not intend to hold free and fair elections come March.. a dictator cannot be removed from political office through legitimately democratic means."

The stories covered in this issue begin with MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai being taken from his home by police in the early hours of 23 January and questioned about a 'freedom march' planned for later that day. This comes just 10 months after he was severely assaulted and seriously injured by police en route to a Save Zimbabwe prayer meeting.

During the MDC's peaceful 'freedom march', scores of opposition supporters were teargassed and beaten up by police, whose original banning of the march had been overruled by a local magistrate. Two days later, the leader of Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe was arrested and interrogated by Harare police. A covert campaign of night-time intimidation in poor ghettos of Bulawayo followed a weekend street demonstration by pressure group Ibhetshu Likazulu.

The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), a domestic election-monitoring and observation group in Zimbabwe, has expressed concern with the current social and political environment as it relates to the forthcoming elections.

The amendments to three highly contentious acts were rushed through Parliament without any meaningful debate on the contentious provisions of the enabling bills.

The opposition says new constituencies have been demarcated in a way that favours Zanu PF. The demarcation is also criticised for being based on a flawed voters' roll, which has thousands of ghost voters, some of them long since deceased or who have moved. Copies of the delimitation report have not been made available to legislators, journalists or voters.

Spokesman Gabriel Chaibva (MDC Mutambara) says what they have seen indicates the electoral commission has failed to adhere to the terms of last year's 18th constitutional amendment which authorised the redistricting.

Zimbabwe's Media and Information Commission (MIC) is insisting that Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe, publishers of the banned Daily News and Daily New on Sunday, re-submit their application for an operating licence. This means that there is no way in which the newspapers will get back their licences before the elections.

Zanu PF continues to insist on redistributing food aid from donors and to deny the provision of desperately needed farming equipment to opposition supporters

Zimbabwe's opposition leader detained
Source Date: 23-01-2008

Police took away Zimbabwe's main opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai in the middle of the night for questioning about a demonstration planned for later on Wednesday, his lawyer said.

"The police are saying they want to know what he is planning to do today," lawyer Alec Muchadehama told Reuters....

The police had initially granted permission for Wednesday's march, which the MDC called to protest against a crumbling economy blamed on government mismanagement as well as to press for a new constitution....

Source: [Reuters](#)

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

Robert Mugabe's reforms are ridiculed after police crackdown on Zimbabwe rally

Source Date: 24-01-2008

Zimbabwean police fired teargas yesterday and charged several hundred demonstrators who were demanding a democratic constitution, water, electricity and the right to draw money from banks without queuing.

The leader of the Opposition was detained, ten demonstrators were treated in hospital and dozens were arrested, lawyers said...

Mr Tsvangirai said that the police clampdown proved that President Mugabe was not serious about his pledge to hold free elections in March and announced that his party would respond by stepping up protests.

Mr Mugabe had "failed the test for a free and fair election", Mr Tsvangirai said. "If this is the regime's reaction then elections are just a farce."

The march and the planned rally were the first test of Mr Mugabe's credibility after he had agreed, under mediation overseen by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the 14-nation regional bloc, to a wide series of reforms of legislation used to crush gatherings of his opponents....

Source: [Times, The \(UK\)](#)

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections

- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

News release from the Zimbabwe Vigil

Source Date: 25-01-2008

The Zimbabwe Vigil said that the leader of its partner organisation, Restoration of Human Rights in Zimbabwe (ROHR Zimbabwe), had been detained by police in Harare on Friday January 25.

The Vigil said it had received a text message from ROHR leader Stendrick Zvorwadza (which read) "arrested and under interrogation, have been detained four hours so far". ... He reported he was in police custody in a cell with 200 others.

Other ROHR activists had been beaten up following a protest ... but were ... out on bail.

Source: [Zimbabwe Vigil](#)

SADC standards breached

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- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

State sponsored violence comes to Bulawayo

Source Date: 22-01-2008

There is a covert campaign of night time intimidation in poor (Bulawayo) ghettos following a weekend street demonstration by pressure group Ibhetshu Likazulu, which is demanding reparations for the Gukurahundi atrocities....

Until the past few days, the poor ghettos of Makokoba and Mzilikazi, mainly peopled by members of the Ndebele ethnic group, had been largely untouched by the political turmoil gripping the rest of the country.

But there are reports of a State-sanctioned crackdown involving ruling party activists against Ibhetshu Likazulu activists, most of whom live in Makokoba and Mzilikazi...

Residents tell of being woken in the middle of the night by the sound of rapping on their doors.

"Zanu thugs from Davies Hall are trying to terrorize us and to force us to attend their political meetings," declares Mishkei Ncube, referring to Mugabe's Zanu PF party...

Source: [Zimbabwean, The \(ZW\)](#)

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...

Concern over pre-election environment

Source Date: 25-01-2008

PRESS RELEASE

The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), a domestic election-monitoring and observation group in Zimbabwe, which in December 2007 deployed 120 long-term observers countrywide, is concerned with the current social and political environment as it relates to the forthcoming elections.

The organisation expresses its disquiet with the manner in which critical electoral processes such as voter registration and delimitation of constituencies have been conducted. The recent events in the country are particularly worrying as they reflect a regrettable level of political intolerance.

ZESN is also disturbed to note that the aforementioned issues that were discussed and agreed upon under the SADC initiated talks still lack a concrete and positive implementation. When SADC appointed President Mbeki in March 2007 to facilitate the talks between Zanu PF and MDC, the main objective of these talks was to have an election whose outcome would not be contested.

More than ten months have elapsed since these talks started and the electoral environment in Zimbabwe is still far from yielding a result whose outcome would not be contested.

ZESN condemns the police's heavy-handedness in dealing with the MDC's Freedom March on 23 January 2008. ...

They briefly arrested the opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, but later released him without charge. The MDC appealed to the magistrates' court as provided for in the recently amended security legislation and the court upheld the police's arguments.

This was in stark contrast to Zanu PF's "Million Men March" in December 2007 which went on without hitches, with the police actually providing escort for the marchers. The police's conduct raises unnecessary tension ...

Investigations by ZESN have revealed ... interesting observations on how the electoral management body, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) is treating the voter registration exercise...

ZESN calls on all stakeholders to create an enabling environment for the conduct of free, fair and peaceful elections. It reiterates that it is necessary for the government, ZEC and political parties to conduct the elections in a manner that conforms to regional and international standards thus conferring legitimacy to the resultant government.

Source: [Zimbabwean, The \(ZW\)](#)

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
- 2.1.7: Independence of the Judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions ...
- 2.1.8: Voter education.
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 4.1.3: Non-discrimination in the voters' registration;
- 7.1: [The member state holding elections shall] Take necessary measures to ensure the scrupulous implementation of the above principles ...
- 7.3: [The member state holding elections shall] Establish impartial, all-inclusive, competent and accountable national electoral bodies staffed by qualified personnel ...
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

Zimbabwe opposition cites 'anomalies' in national redistricting report
Source Date: 17-01-2008

With national elections possibly less than 10 weeks off, one grouping of Zimbabwe's opposition Movement for Democratic Change has cited "anomalies" in a redistricting report given to parliament Wednesday by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission.

The first reservations about the report were expressed by the MDC formation led by Arthur Mutambara...

Spokesman Gabriel Chaibva ... told VOA's Studio 7 for Zimbabwe that what his grouping has seen so far indicates that the electoral commission failed to adhere to the terms of last year's 18th constitutional amendment which authorised the redistricting.

Source: [VOANews \(USA\)](#)

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
- 2.1.7: Independence of the Judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions ...
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 4.1.3: Non-discrimination in the voters' registration;
- 7.3: [The member state holding elections shall] Establish impartial, all-inclusive, competent and accountable national electoral bodies staffed by qualified personnel ...
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...
- 7.6: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the availability of adequate logistics and resources for carrying out democratic elections;
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

Delimitation exercise dismissed as a fraud

Source Date: 21-01-2008

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) (MT) says new constituencies have been demarcated in a way that favours the ruling Zanu PF.

Commenting on the demarcation of 210 constituencies to be contested in the harmonised polls set for March, secretary for elections Ian Makone said from the outset the whole delimitation method was "fraudulent" because it was based on a "flawed" process.

He said the delimitation was based on a flawed voters' roll, which had thousands of ghost voters, some of them long since deceased, while others had moved from their original constituencies.

"There were very glaring anomalies in the voters' roll," said Makone

The party claimed the delimitation report was being deliberately made inaccessible so that both MPs and their electorate remain in the dark about the constituencies until the last minute....

The MDC said some urban areas had been attached to rural areas or been split in a bid to neutralise the opposition party's urban dominance.

They said this pattern was most pronounced in Mutare, Harare and Bulawayo....

Source: [Zimbabwe Standard, The \(ZW\)](#)

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.1: Full participation of the citizens in the political process;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
- 2.1.7: Independence of the Judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions ...
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 4.1.3: Non-discrimination in the voters' registration;
- 4.1.4: Existence of updated and accessible voters roll;
- 7.3: [The member state holding elections shall] Establish impartial, all-inclusive, competent and accountable national electoral bodies staffed by qualified personnel ...
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...
- 7.6: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the availability of adequate logistics and resources for carrying out democratic elections;
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

Between the lines

Source Date: 26-01-2008

The Zimbabwean government's move to ask two independent newspapers it had banned to re-register is being viewed with much scepticism in local media circles.

The Daily News and the Daily News on Sunday, both published by Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ), were shut down by the government-controlled Media and Information

Commission (MIC) in September 2003 after they failed to register under the controversial Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA).

The newspapers had been critical of the Zanu PF government. The Daily News, set up in 1999, was believed to have the biggest circulation in the country - around 100,000 - when it was closed....

Takura Zhangazha, spokesman for the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA, Zimbabwe chapter), said"It's a political game. There is no way in which the two newspapers are going to be given back their licences before the elections, as would have been ideal to ensure balanced and diversified media coverage of the polls."...

Zhangazha said the process of registering the newspapers would require at least two months to complete, "but then, that would just be the elementary stage, considering that the banned papers have a mammoth logistical task in mobilising resources, recruiting staff, among other requirements, to ensure a serious media project"....

Source: [IRIN \(UN\)](#)

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...
- 7.6: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the availability of adequate logistics and resources for carrying out democratic elections;
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

Aid clash - Zanu insists on distributing food aid from donors

Source Date: 22-01-2008

The Zanu PF regime has clashed with non governmental organisations (NGO)s over the distribution of humanitarian aid, as it insists on them channelling the assistance through its structures for campaigning purposes ahead of the combined presidential and parliamentary elections.

Crisis Coalition, an umbrella of civic organizations has confirmed that the regime has stalled a lot of progress in the distribution of food aid, drugs, clothing and blankets sourced by donor organizations and talks have reached a deadlock.

The regime is demanding that all aid should be distributed through its channels, which includes district administrators, local government officials as well as traditional leaders, long known for their blind support and loyalty to Zanu PF...

The World Food Programme has said about six million Zimbabweans are in dire need of humanitarian assistance and the situation is set to worsen due to the failure of the current agricultural season through excessive rains and the attendant problems associated with Mugabe's chaotic land reform programme.

Note: SW Radio Africa reports that, as parts of the country battle rising flood waters, Zanu PF is being accused of manipulating relief aid distribution centres to campaign for the coming

March elections.... Party leaders are making it clear villagers have to vote for Zanu PF if they want to be looked after.....

Source: [Zimbabwean, The \(ZW\)](#)

SADC standards breached

- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...

Farm equipment used to buy votes

Source Date: 17-01-2008

Zanu PF is using farm equipment and threats to sway voters ahead of elections to be held in March, a report by a pressure group says.

The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), which is monitoring the pre-election period, reports numerous cases of politicisation of state and public functions and programmes in rural areas.

ZESN has deployed 120 long-term observers that are monitoring election related events in the existing 120 parliamentary constituencies....

(For example) ZESN says its observers found that in the Midlands province, traditional leaders in Silobela, particularly Chiefs Gobo and Ruya, have banned all opposition activity in their areas....

Source: [Financial Gazette, The \(ZW\)](#)

SADC standards breached

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- 2.1.2: Freedom of association;
- 2.1.3: Political tolerance;
- 2.1.6: Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
- 2.1.8: Voter education.
- 4.1.1: Constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom and rights of citizens
- 4.1.2: Conducive environment for free, fair and peaceful elections
- 7.4: [The member state holding elections shall] Safeguard the human and civil liberties of all citizens ...
- 7.5: [The member state holding elections shall] Take all necessary measures and precautions to prevent the perpetration of fraud, rigging...
- 7.8: [The member state holding elections shall] Ensure the transparency and integrity of the entire electoral process ...
- 7.9: [The member state holding elections shall] Encourage the participation of women, disabled and youth in all aspects of the electoral process ...